

# 'I'M A WHITE KID... I'VE BEEN SHOWN THE WAYS BY A BLACKFELLA'

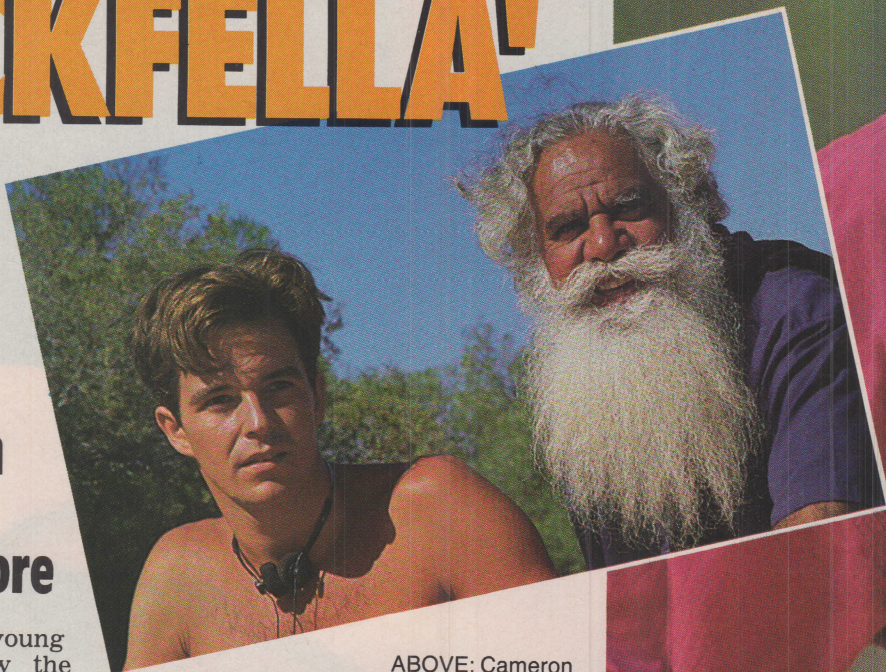
**As controversy  
flares over  
Bony's return,  
Cameron  
reveals how  
Burnum Burnum  
taught him  
Aboriginal folklore**

CAMERON DADDO is a young actor who does not know the meaning of the word failure.

He seems to succeed with everything he puts his talent to — TV's *A Perfect Match*, the musicals *Big River*, *The Wizard Of Oz* and *The Hunting Of The Snark*, the mini-series *Heroes* and the telemovie *Bony*. No doubt he will shine again in *Golden Fiddles*, *Tracks Of Glory* — and the series *Bony*, which he is now filming for *Grundy*, *Beta-Taurus* and the *Seven Network*.

But controversy has again arisen over this series of *Bony*, which will consist of 13 one-hour programs shot over 20 weeks at various Australian locations. This time, Arthur Upfield's half-caste blacktracker, Napoleon Bonaparte, has been rewritten as a white man, after *Grundy*'s four months of negotiations with unions and Koori representatives.

The agreement has also guaranteed that all Aboriginal characters in the series will be played by Aborigines and that there will be no "blackening up" of actors.



ABOVE: Cameron with respected Aboriginal actor Burnum Burnum.

There was the inclusion also of a general policy statement designed to "encourage the recognition of our Aboriginal and multicultural heritage" — and that Aboriginal actors will play non-stereotype roles, such as doctors, which could be played by persons from any ethnic group.

While all this was going on, Cameron slipped quietly into his character and began filming an episode on the Gold Coast, in which *Bony* was out to solve a corporate fraud case and murder.

He likes the character *Bony* and, after having played him in the telemovie, reckons he knows him pretty well. In the movie, *Bony* had a little Aboriginal blood; in the series, he's white. Cameron wonders what all the fuss is about.

"I've always said his Aboriginality came out of his upbringing, not so much in the blood," he tells *TV WEEK* on location at Currumbin Bird Sanctu-



● An action scene from the new series of Bony.



ary. "I'm a white kid . . . I've been shown the ways by a blackfella."

This blackfella is actor Burnum Burnum, who plays Aboriginal elder Uncle Albert in the series.

"From my own psyche, my own thinking, I still possess all the things I had in the movie, even more because, as Bony grows, he learns more from Uncle Albert about Aboriginal folklore," Cameron says.

"I've said it from the beginning — that's where his Aboriginality comes from, not his blood.

"You can be an Aborigine and not know a bloody thing about the bush or the land if you haven't been passed down any stories. This is a very positive series for Aborigines, because it is showing their true mysticism and legends. It shows how unique and wonderful their stories are . . . and how useful they are. Their way of thinking is so sensible and simple and, for me, one of the reasons I took the part was because we need to get back to simple. Most people talk so much . . . they're so filled up with garbage that no-one knows quite where they stand any more."

Cameron says the trait he admires most about Bony is his enviable sixth sense.

"That's what Bony's all about, in a way," he says. "He looks further, listens closer and is a lot more subtle. I'd love to be like that."

Cameron, who is engaged to model Alison Brahe, is looking forward to a break and a holiday at the end of the year after working non-stop for more than three years.

"I do need a holiday and now, depending whether this goes ahead next year, I'll get two months — and I'll go on a honeymoon, which will be great."

Story: Garry Shelley  
Pictures: David Mason